

"MEMPHIS DURING THE CRUMP ERA"
INTERVIEWS WITH
MR. JAMES JACKSON

BY - CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
TRANSCRIBER - BETTY WILLIAMS
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

BRISTER LIBRARY

*This book printed
and bound
through a gift ~
from
Major Ben R.
and Kathleen J. Schultze.*

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY COLLECTION



24901871 OHT 12/4/91



MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES

MVC
F
444
M557
C7823x

1988

UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS LIBRARIES



3 2109 00698 4240



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

<http://archive.org/details/memphisduringcru00craw>



"MEMPHIS DURING THE CRUMP ERA"

INTERVIEWS WITH MR. JAMES JACKSON

SEPTEMBER 1, 15, 1988

PATTERN		BINDING COPY											
Type	Size	CUST. ACCT. NO.	LIBRARY	PATTERN NO.	COLOR		TRIM	SPINE	CUST. PAT. NO.				
				PRINT		MATERIAL							
HORIZONTAL		X											
VERTICAL		TITLE) "MEMPHIS DURING CRUMP ERA" (SUBTITLE) JAMES JACKSON ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE (NEAR BOTTOM) CRAWFORD MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY											
FRONT OR BACK		(TITLE) "MEMPHIS DURING THE CRUMP ERA" (SUBTITLE) INTERVIEWS WITH MR. JAMES JACKSON BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD TRANSCRIBER: BETTY WILLIAMS											
LIBRARY		ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY											
CALL													
IMPRINT													
PANEL LINES													
COLLATE													
PLEASE LEAVE SEPARATION PAGE IN BETWEEN INTERVIEWS													
BINDERY	SPECIAL PREP.		INSERT MATERIAL	BEN SEW	PERMA-FILM		POCKETS		PRODUCT	VOL.	QTY	JOB NO.	
	TAPE STUB		FILLER		FILLER W. STUB	SEP. SHEETS	OVER 12"	UNDER 12"	PAPER	BUCK.	CLOTH		
	GUM		STUB				IN PAPER	IN CLOTH		CLOTH EXT.	TRIM	COVER SIZE	COVER NO.

"MEMPHIS DURING THE CRUMP ERA"

INTERVIEWS WITH MR. JAMES JACKSON

SEPTEMBER 1, 15, 1988

BY

CHARLES W. CRAWFORD

TRANSCRIBER: BETTY WILLIAMS

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

"*Das kann mir keiner erzählen!*"
Herrn. Frau. Dr. Herrn. Doktorin
Herr. Frau. Doktorin

„*Geht nicht so schnell*“

Wiederholung: „Geht nicht so schnell“

Wiederholung: „Geht nicht so schnell“

Wiederholung: „Geht nicht so schnell“

17.12.2013 17:03
12.12.2013 10:30

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

I hereby release all right, title, or interest in
and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the Mississippi Valley Archives of the John Willard Brister Library of Memphis State University and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and published by the said Archives, which also may assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars.

PLACE Memphis, TN

DATE September 1, 1988

James Jackson
(INTERVIEWEE)

Charles W. Crawford

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives
of the John Willard Brister Library
of Memphis State University)

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

I hereby release all right, title, or interest in
and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the Mississ-
ippi Valley Archives of the John Willard Brister Li-
brary of Memphis State University and declare that they
may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may
be copyrighted and published by the said Archives, which
also may assign said copyright and publication rights
to serious research scholars.

PLACE Memphis, TN

DATE September 1, 1988

James Jackson
(INTERVIEWEE)

Charles W. Crawford

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives
of the John Willard Brister Library
of Memphis State University)

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THE PROJECT IS "MEMPHIS DURING THE CRUMP ERA." THE DATE IS SEPTEMBER 1, 1988. THE PLACE IS MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. JAMES JACKSON. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW I.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Jackson, I think you will remember things that will help us and I would like to start by asking when and where you were born, sir?

MR. JACKSON: Tuscumbia, Alabama.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year?

MR. JACKSON: July 31, 1896.

DR. CRAWFORD: Eighteen ninety-six. Now, that was before TVA and before Wilson Dam, wasn't it?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes. Wilson Dam came in 1917.

DR. CRAWFORD: And that is where you grew up?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What were your parents' names?

MR. JACKSON: James Jackson and Adleathea Wardlaw Jackson.

W-A-R-D-L-A-W.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did your parents do, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: My father was a lawyer and my mother was a school teacher.

DR. CRAWFORD: And in Tuscumbia how close were you to the river?

The Tennessee River?

MR. JACKSON: About four miles.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever see Muscle Shoals before they built the dam?

MR. JACKSON: No, I've got a picture of that area and the water running over the shoals, but I've never been down there.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was a real problem for navigation, wasn't it?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's why they built the dam with a lock.

MR. JACKSON: They first built locks around the shoals. That preceeded the dam at Muscle Shoals.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know about when they built Wilson Dam?

MR. JACKSON: Nineteen seventeen.

DR. CRAWFORD: World War I, wasn't it?

MR. JACKSON: It was in the process at the time of World War I.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Jackson, when World War I came, what were you doing?

MR. JACKSON: I was working at the bank--First National Bank.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where had you gone to school?

MR. JACKSON: I went to a private school in Tuscumbia.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was it called?

MR. JACKSON: Strangely enough, it was a girls school known as Dedgler Female Institute.

DR. CRAWFORD: Dedgler Female Institute?

MR. JACKSON: Yes. When I got to be a little older, my mother had a boys school that she named after her father who was in the Civil War. He was in the Halcolpem Legion--H-O-L-

C-O-L-P-E-M. She named the little school--small school--Holcolpem Hall. That was the boys school. Then I went to Florence Normal. It has since come to be named University of North Alabama.

DR. CRAWFORD: It has grown a lot. I saw it a few years ago.

MR. JACKSON: It was a long time ago.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you study there?

MR. JACKSON: Just Latin and history and literature and mathematics.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you leave Normal school?

MR. JACKSON: I finished in 1917.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that in the spring?

MR. JACKSON: It was the spring of 1917. After I graduated from that I went to Tuscumbia to work at the the First National Bank.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long did you get to work there?

MR. JACKSON: I worked a year--just about a year before I went into the army.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you go into the army, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: About May of 1918. I entered in Florence, Alabama.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where did you go for training?

MR. JACKSON: I went first to Chattanooga, Oglethorpe.

DR. CRAWFORD: Fort Oglethorpe?

MR. JACKSON: Oglethorpe. And then went to Savannah--Camp Merrit. It was a artillery post. I stayed there and trained there before I went overseas.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you study there? What kind of artillery were you with?

MR. JACKSON: Heavy artillery. It was a coast artillery. But when I went overseas, they transferred me into railroad artillery.

DR. CRAWFORD: What size artillery field pieces did you have?

MR. JACKSON: Twelve or sixteen inches.

DR. CRAWFORD: They were very large!

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you go overseas?

MR. JACKSON: We landed in Brest, France.

DR. CRAWFORD: Brest, France, yes. What month did you get to France, sir?

MR. JACKSON: It was in the summer. I think it was about July.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, the fighting was still going on.

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where were you sent then?

MR. JACKSON: I went two or three places. We went to Jievras.

From there we went to a little town near Reignac. From there we went to Montoir. We had the armistice in the meantime and we left and stayed there all the winter and left in December.

DR. CRAWFORD: Of 1918?

MR. JACKSON: Yes, no, 1919.

DR. CRAWFORD: You stayed over after the war ended?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, did you have any combat duty with your artillery?

MR. JACKSON: Not till Eason. Only thing we did was guard duty.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were with the railway artillery when you went over?

MR. JACKSON: No, when we got over that was what we were going to do, but it was such a big job to get these pieces loaded on railroad cars and established all set up, time ran out before they used them.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you know that would have been very heavy artillery.

MR. JACKSON: Well, it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did the United States use anything that heavy over there in combat--12 or 16 inch guns?

MR. JACKSON: I don't believe they used the 12 or 16. Maybe not more than ten, but it was more or less an experiment. What do you do with these new things?

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you hear about the German artillery over there?

MR. JACKSON: Big Bertha.

DR. CRAWFORD: What size was Big Bertha? I've wondered.

MR. JACKSON: I just heard about it and knew it could function at a long distance.

DR. CRAWFORD: They shelled Paris with that, didn't they?

MR. JACKSON: That's right. I don't know what to tell you about the size of it. They did shell Paris.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think that I saw a photograph one time of Big Bertha.

MR. JACKSON: Is that right?

DR. CRAWFORD: As I remember it had an extremely long barrel and high velocity, but I don't know what size it was.

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: I think I have heard--but surely this can't be right--that they shelled Paris from about 70 miles away?

MR. JACKSON: Seventy?

DR. CRAWFORD: I find that hard to believe.

MR. JACKSON: I do too. It was a great distance. I don't know what it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you did guard duty then in France and came back
S December, 1919.

MR. JACKSON: No, it was in supplies. We were at Reignac when they signed the Armistice.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was good news, I am sure.

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes, I was just thrilled with the cessation of the war. It overcame the French; they were so happy about it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did everyone celebrate when they heard about the Armistice?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes! I remember we were in a small town of Reignac. The town people gathered there and I don't know what kind of hall it was, but I remember they danced--the kind of dancing the French did and the spinning around. The hall was full of people happy and they showed it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you come back to America on a troop ship?

MR. JACKSON: A combination troop ship and medical ship. They had it wired up so as to keep the sick men separate and some of the sick men were shell shocked and not themselves.

I remember one day somebody from the ship decided that they were shooting at some fish or something. It set these shell shocked boys into pandemonium. They stopped that.

DR. CRAWFORD: They had heard all the shooting they wanted .

MR. JACKSON: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where were you discharged?

MR. JACKSON: Chattanooga.

DR. CRAWFORD: Fort Oglethorpe? When did you get back to Florence, Mr. Jackson, or to Tuscumbia?

MR. JACKSON: I should remember that clearly.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was during the winter of 1919-20, wasn't it? What did you do then?

MR. JACKSON: Yes. I came to Memphis. My uncle was director of Union Planters Bank. He had asked them to take me on and they gave me a job in the bookkeeping department.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would have been early in 1920, wouldn't it?

MR. JACKSON: No, it was still 1919.

DR. CRAWFORD: That you came to Memphis?

MR. JACKSON: Yes. I came to Memphis in May of 1919 as well as I can remember.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you went to work for Union Planters Bank?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you like that work?

MR. JACKSON: It was unfortunate that I was not of a bookkeeping temperament. I wasn't accurate and I didn't do well. So I quit there and went into life insurance business with the Massachusetts Mutual Insurance Company.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you go with Massachusetts Mutual?

MR. JACKSON: I'd say that was about July, 1919. That is not a very good guess, but I think it is accurate.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where was your office then?

MR. JACKSON: In the old Ford Building.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that on Union Avenue?

MR. JACKSON: No, Ford Building was the first office building in Memphis. I think it had about ten floors.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was downtown, wasn't it?

MR. JACKSON: Just off of Main and Madison.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long did you work out of that office?

MR. JACKSON: I worked three years. Then I went to work for a brokerage firm--W.B. Bayliss Company.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you do at Bayliss Company?

MR. JACKSON: Sales up and down the east coast.

DR. CRAWFORD: What were you doing while you traveled?

MR. JACKSON: We were selling an old old line--plow-line rope, hickory tool handles, lamp chimneys.

DR. CRAWFORD: They were all important things then that aren't used much now.

MR. JACKSON: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: But your home was in Memphis even when you traveled?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What part of town did you live in?

MR. JACKSON: Eight forty-seven Adams. That's near the corner of Adams and Dunlap.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did your uncle live there?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you shared a place with him?

MR. JACKSON: Yes. I was with that company about five years traveling part of that time in Memphis.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you leave Bayliss Company?

MR. JACKSON: Bayliss was one of the first people to fail his business in 1930.

DR. CRAWFORD: From the Depression?

MR. JACKSON: Yes, his was one of the first businesses to fold.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you do after the Bayliss Company failed?

MR. JACKSON: I despise to tell you. American Legion was trying to get veterans jobs and they called me and told me that there was a job for me with the telephone company. I couldn't believe it. What the job was to go out--I'll use the word resurrect--it was a job to get business back. People had lost their service because they couldn't pay the bills and they just filled up the warehouse with these telephones they were taking out. So it proved to be an important thing to get them back. So the telephone company told us to work out a plan for payment for the old bill with the people by the month and let them get their service again.

DR. CRAWFORD: They wanted to get those telephones back in use.

MR. JACKSON: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you enjoy that work?

MR. JACKSON: Very much. It was a job. It was nice association and I felt like I was helping these people. And I

enjoyed that about five years.

DR. CRAWFORD: Until about 1935, I guess? How did things change during that five year period? Did the economy get better?

MR. JACKSON: That was the beginning of the Depression. We had some pretty low levels after that and it all built up to 1935 or 36. And I saw some during that time and following that time, men were selling apples on the street. Do you remember that?

DR. CRAWFORD: I've heard about it, sir. How bad was the Depression in Memphis? What do you remember seeing?

MR. JACKSON: I was surprised to see the type of people that I saw who were selling apples.

DR. CRAWFORD: What else were people doing to cope with the Depression?

MR. JACKSON: I was just trying to think of a way to emphasize that to you. Boys were not going to college because of it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who took care of the people who didn't have any work? How was that done? Someone must have been handling the charity.

MR. JACKSON: So much is being done now that I can't turn the pages back and see what they were doing at that time. There was a good deal of suffering because of it. Many, many houses were foreclosed--many of them.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about food for the people who were out of work? Was there anyway they could get food?

MR. JACKSON: I will say two things: One is rations were short.

Two is a great movement on the part of many people to have a garden. There was a great emphasis on planting a garden.

DR. CRAWFORD: What were the churches able to do to help?

MR. JACKSON: I'm sure they did something, but I just can't tell what. I know that churches had lists of people in their membership and the children and they were being helped on a comparatively small basis. I can't say how much.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you see a lot of people on the streets then because they didn't have jobs?

MR. JACKSON: The main thing I saw was the young men on the railroads. All the trains were loaded with boys going somewhere, not any particular place but just going some other place particularly to find jobs.

DR. CRAWFORD: Because they couldn't find jobs where they were.

You saw a lot of them on the railroads?

MR. JACKSON: A lot of them. And we had men to come to our back door very often and say that they were away from home and were trying to get back to home and were embarrassed to ask for help but they were stranded.

DR. CRAWFORD: What would you do to help them when they came, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: Sometime we would invite them to eat at the table with us. And we would divide our short ration with them.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you still living with your uncle then?

MR. JACKSON: No, by this time I was married.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did you get married, sir?

MR. JACKSON: January 4, 1930.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was in the Depression.

MR. JACKSON: Right at the bottom of it. I didn't know it though.

DR. CRAWFORD: Whom did you marry, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: Elizabeth Wilson from Trenton, Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you meet her?

MR. JACKSON: Mr. Jim McCree was my uncle's law partner and Mrs. Wilson was a relative of his wife.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was your uncle's name sir?

MR. JACKSON: Thomas H. Jackson.

DR. CRAWFORD: And he was practicing law in Memphis then? Was he in his own firm?

MR. JACKSON: Jackson and McCree.

DR. CRAWFORD: How was his legal business during the Depression?

MR. JACKSON: He had been here forty years and he was a sad man that had lost his wife and boy and he had pretty much retired from the practice of law. He had two or three good retainer's fees--Pullman Company was one of them--he was pretty well retired by that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you were out having to work during the Depression.

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: So you moved out from your uncle's place when you got married, did you?

MR. JACKSON: He had died in the meantime and left the house to my father and my aunt. My aunt and I continued to live there until I got married. But shortly thereafter. My father-in-law gave us a home at 154 North Perkins.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that pretty far out in the country then?

MR. JACKSON: Very far. I often had the question, why did you go so far in the country?

DR. CRAWFORD: And you drove in to work from there?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the street? Was Walnut Grove a street or Poplar or Union the street you used?

MR. JACKSON: I don't believe I can tell you about Walnut Grove Road.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Jackson, what year did you move out to Perkins? Was that soon after you got married?

MR. JACKSON: We went out there in 1934. I've forgotten the month.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was it like out there at the time?

MR. JACKSON: Our house was built by a man that built it himself by hammer and nails. I didn't have any neighbors.

It was vacant around me. There were a few exceptions. People would come out there and be lost and stop and ask me what the direction was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, what was Poplar Avenue like then?
Was it paved?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: But Perkins was not paved, was it?

MR. JACKSON: It wasn't paved as now. When they paved it they proceeded on the basis of the survey. It was much wider than when we looked at it. It was kind of slip paving up to that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were there fields and farms out that way then?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes. We had no water. We had a well and pump. We had a septic tank. We had to pay mileage for our insurance, mileage for our telephone, and we had no fire protection. We had to pay extra for the fire truck run.

DR. CRAWFORD: About Perkins Road South?

MR. JACKSON: That will necessitate a good deal of talking. There was no Perkins right straight down. The straight Perkins is Perkins Extended. The Perkins past Poplar I don't remember what kind of conditions. I don't remember about that.

DR. CRAWFORD: I remember Audubon Park was not a park then. It was still a farm because they made that a park only after World War II. It was way out in the country. Now, the country club came later too. You would drive into town to go to work, wouldn't you?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What school did your children have?

MR. JACKSON: That's an interesting thing. Lausanne School, my wife and I used to pick up children for part of the tuition. Lausanne School has become a big school now. It was just a little school between two old ladies--Miss Jett and I've forgotten the other teacher's name. A little small school.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where was it located then?

MR. JACKSON: It was on Central across and not far from the corner of Belvedere and Central.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you used Lausanne School and that involved a lot of driving. And every day you had to drive in to work for the telephone company when you moved there. But you left the telephone company in 1935.

MR. JACKSON: No, High Tone Real Estate business by that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where did you go into the real estate business, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: E. H. Crump at the corner of Main and Adams.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you happen to go with the Crump Company?

MR. JACKSON: Ham Smythe was a good friend of mine. Do you know Ham Smythe?

DR. CRAWFORD: He is still living, isn't he sir?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: I am supposed to interview him.

MR. JACKSON: That is interesting.

DR. CRAWFORD: Ben Schultze and I are supposed to see him and Katherine Smythe at a ceremony at Memorial Park next month. We are going to have a historical marker. You knew Mr. Hamilton Smythe and that is why you went with Crump. What connection did he have with Mr. Crump?

MR. JACKSON: He was Vice President of the mortgage department.

DR. CRAWFORD: He helped you get the job in the real estate department.

MR. JACKSON: As a salesman.

DR. CRAWFORD: Your office was at the building at Main and Adams.

MR. JACKSON: It was the bank and the real estate department.

DR. CRAWFORD: How was real estate sales in the mid 1930s? Was the economy getting better?

MR. JACKSON: The economy had been so severe E. H. Crump Company had twelve hundred houses to sell. Twelve hundred houses that have been foreclosed by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and he represented the Metropolitan and he had exclusive right to sell them.

DR. CRAWFORD: And that was your job--selling these houses. How did you do at it?

MR. JACKSON: There were many of us. There were about ten salesmen. We were able to give them 5% down for houses and long term. It was about as easy for these people to buy a house as it was to rent one.

DR. CRAWFORD: That made selling easier, didn't it?

MR. JACKSON: It was, but even that small amount of money was short.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did they foreclose on any agains?

MR. JACKSON: Very, very seldom.

DR. CRAWFORD: The economy was beginning to get better, wasn't it?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: While you were working in the real estate department for Crump Company, did you meet Mr. E. H. Crump sir?

MR. JACKSON: We would see him around. I remember I had a friend from Collierville that wanted to meet Mr. Crump.

He came and pled with me to introduce him to Crump. But there was a feeling of stand-off and I hesitated to bring somebody to introduce him. There were so many people asking for Mr. Crump for something. You hated to be just another one. I remember though Mr. Crump heard that I had refused or I had not agreed to introduce somebody to him. He let it be known that I didn't realize his type. He was to meet everybody. I shouldn't do that again.

DR. CRAWFORD: So did you bring your friend in from Collierville in to see him?

MR. JACKSON: It was too late. He let me hear about what happened, but it was too late for that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you bring any other people in to meet him?

MR. JACKSON: No. Occasionally, if my car was handy and he wanted to go home sometime. He'd ask me to take him home--or anybody who was standing around. We'd talk about things generally . Not politics, but about things on the way home. I found it right pleasant.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of person was he? What was he like?

MR. JACKSON: He didn't shave himself.

DR. CRAWFORD: He never shaved himself, but he went to the barber shop.

MR. JACKSON: He let the barber understand that when he shaved him he was to keep that towel below his eyes. He wanted to be alert.

DR. CRAWFORD: He had to see who came into the barber shop.

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he as good as people said at remembering names?

MR. JACKSON: He was splendid! Splendid!

I think he overdid it. People would tell you that he never forgot anybody. Of course he did, but he had a man named (I can't remember the name)--a driver--that was a real estate salesman too. He was always having this man to find out who name was that he didn't know. He would sure find out who it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: So he would know the name?

MR. JACKSON: Yes. I wish I could think of that fellow's name.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was someone who worked with you in real estate sales?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did Mr. Crump dress?

MR. JACKSON: Spotlessly. He didn't want any creases on his clothes. He wantd his clothes to be pressed but not creased.

DR. CRAWFORD: He did not want creases in his trousers?

MR. JACKSON: No. He wore his hair long. Always had his hair long.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he wear a large hat?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What color hat was it? I think I've seen pictures of a white hat.

MR. JACKSON: Yes. I don't know about a winter hat. I can remember white hats. Not a severe hat or one that didn't have a stiff brim on his hat. I noticed when he spoke to

ladies frequently he would tip his hat, wouldn't take it off.

DR. CRAWFORD: It sounds as if he had old-fashioned Southern manners.

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes. His brother lived many years after he got to be an old man himself.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was the brother?

MR. JACKSON: His mother lived in Holly Springs. He would come back and forth to see her.

DR. CRAWFORD: I have heard he went down every week to see his mother.

MR. JACKSON: I expect so.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of business manager was he, Mr. Jackson? Did Crump Company do well?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes, splendid. It was very strict to deal with and honest to deal with. Everything would be according to agreement.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was highly organized, wasn't he?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes. He was so well organized that it has grown up to be a national firm now.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long did you work for E. H. Crump and Company?

MR. JACKSON: I think about five years and then I went to the Edwin LeMaster Company.

DR. CRAWFORD: So you left about 1940 or so, didn't you?

MR. JACKSON: Yes about that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Jackson, I thank you for taking all the time this morning. This has been a valuable addition to what we have about Memphis history. I'd like to talk with you

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THE PROJECT IS "MEMPHIS DURING CRUMP ERA." THE PLACE IS MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. THE DATE IS SEPTEMBER 15, 1988. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. JAMES JACKSON. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW II.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Jackson, we got some very useful information the other time about Memphis in the 1920s and early thirties and about your experience. I know the Depression was still on and you had moved out to Perkins. Do you remember what year it was that you went to work for the Crump Company in the real estate department? Would that have been the middle 1930s?

MR. JACKSON: It was the middle of the 1930s.

DR. CRAWFORD: Because I think you were with the telephone company until about 1935, weren't you?

MR. JACKSON: A little before that. [I was with] the telephone company in '32.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know about when you left the phone company?

MR. JACKSON: I think I was there two years.

DR. CRAWFORD: If you went in 1932 you would have been there about to 1934?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you go to work right away for the Crump Company or was there a time in between?

MR. JACKSON: Roughly the same time.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you get the job with the Crump Company?

MR. JACKSON: I told you I had been with W.B. Bayliss Company and one or two people with the Crump Company had been with Bayliss. I also had a good friend, Ham Smythe. Do you know Mr. Hamilton Smythe?

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, I am going to talk with him after our meetings. In fact, Ben Schultze and I were with his son, Hamilton Smythe, Jr. yesterday and his daughter-in-law, Katherine Smythe. You knew him at that time?

MR. JACKSON: Oh, yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long had you known him, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: I had known him ten years.

DR. CRAWFORD: Most of the time you had been in Memphis, hadn't you? Was he working for the Crump Company in the real estate department then too?

MR. JACKSON: I'd like to say this. Through the years that I knew Ham Smythe, I knew his boy who was going to Bell Buckle School. He and I talked about it. You've heard about the Bell Buckle School?

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes.

MR. JACKSON: Ham Jr. was a very personable boy. He enjoyed telling me about Bell Buckle. I said I'd send him a little jacket if he would learn how to speak. So that was the reason I knew Ham Smythe.

DR. CRAWFORD: He helped you go to work at the real estate department. And your first work there was estate sales, wasn't it, of about 1200 foreclosed homes?

MR. JACKSON: That's what we all were doing. I was in the sales department. We had other homes too that we secured for selling. But the main thing was these foreclosed homes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How successful were you in selling them?

MR. JACKSON: I would say moderately so. Times were hard. The fact that these houses were all foreclosed property meant that people were not in good circumstances. I would say moderately so.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where were they located? Were they all over the city? Were they in any certain price range--low or high or were there different kinds?

MR. JACKSON: As compared to today's prices, they were all low. They were around ten thousand. Many were below that and very few above that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Of course, that was a very nice home at the time.

MR. JACKSON: At the time they had all been reconditioned at the expense of the insurance company. They fixed up and painted.

DR. CRAWFORD: After they were foreclosed?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you have any idea about how many people were in the real estate department then?

MR. JACKSON: You mean up there? We had about a half a dozen salesmen.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you like working there, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: I enjoyed it. I enjoyed my work with them very

very much.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you notice times getting better after you have been there a while? Was the Depression improving?

MR. JACKSON: Improvement was very slow.

DR. CRAWFORD: People were getting back to work and they had a little more money, I guess?

MR. JACKSON: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you have any trouble arranging financing for your buyers?

MR. JACKSON: Very simple. The only thing we had to have was good background and good credit because the only thing I had to get was five percent of cost. Although times were hard, five percent was available. Most everybody that was able to consider buying a home could get up five percent.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was what they needed for a down payment.

MR. JACKSON: That's all and the monthly payments for just about what the rent was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I can see why people would want to buy them if they could.

MR. JACKSON: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you say they were scattered all over the city? How long did you stay at the Crump Company, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: Five years.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember what year you left?

MR. JACKSON: No, I don't.

DR. CRAWFORD: It would have been about the end of the thirties or

the beginning of the forties--just before World War II. How did your work change while you were there? I suppose after a while you had the foreclosed homes sold, didn't you?

MR. JACKSON: Yes, we sold the homes all the time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did the company grow in that time?

MR. JACKSON: Oh the company was really an insurance company. and they represented the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Because of the fact that Metropolitan had to take all these foreclosures they told the E.H.Crump Company that they must sell them for them. So that is the reason we had the business. But they never did care so much about the real estate business. They were mainly an insurance company. But there was a constant growing--not so much then--but it was growing. Later on it has grown to the point where it is one of the big companies of the country now.

DR. CRAWFORD: Crump has been bought out by the James Company now hasn't it?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long did they keep the real estate department?

MR. JACKSON: They've still got it.

DR. CRAWFORD: You worked down at Main and Adams, didn't you?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you would drive into work every day from Perkins?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were the streets paved when you started going in?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: All the way?

MR. JACKSON: Well after a fashion. The street on Perkins was in slip of asphalt. Later on, it was refinished on a basis of hard surfacing all the way to the known property lines. At first it was just asphalted in the center for operating not an individual line but two lines. I'm trying to say to all this to the property service line.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you drive into town on Poplar or Walnut Grove or some other way in the thirties.

MR. JACKSON: Yes, Poplar and Northville Road were good.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you remember about Mr. Crump himself? You got to see him sometimes, didn't you?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes. He would appear in the real estate department infrequently. He was jovial, spoke to everybody and had pleasant things to say. But no talk at all about how the business was that was all it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was about sixty years, I think then. Do you remember how he looked.

MR. JACKSON: He was clean-shaven and had long hair. He usually wore a hat that was not rigid--not. . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Sort of a soft brimmed hat?

MR. JACKSON: That's right. He was an immaculate dresser. I noticed he had a tailor who was told not to have creases in my trousers.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he wear his white hat in the winter as well as the summer?

MR. JACKSON: No, I think only summer. I hadn't thought about

that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever travel with him any?

MR. JACKSON: Occasionally, Mr. Coleman was a man who sold real estate. But he was at Mr. Crump's beck and call. When Mr. Coleman was busy at something or other duty, Mr. Crump would ask someone to take him home. On occasion I did.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever talk with him at times like that?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you talk about? What kind of conversationalist was he?

MR. JACKSON: I would say conversationally, he knew an uncle of mine who was a boyhood friend from Oxford, Mississippi. They used to go to dances together when they were boys. We talked about interesting sidelights. We didn't get into politics.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he seem to be well informed about things?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes, yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose anyone in business has to keep up with things.

MR. JACKSON: He not only was what you'd call an extensive reader but he got information from everybody he knew.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was very much interested in information, wasn't he?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know if he read many newspapers?

MR. JACKSON: I think I remember that he would take two or three

extra ones in addition to the local papers. There were two then you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, the Press Scimitar and The Commercial Appeal. Did you ever go inside his house?

MR. JACKSON: On a very sad occasion. His boy was lost in an airplane accident.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was John, I believe, wasn't it?

MR. JACKSON: I was at his home at the time of John's death and remember we were all standing, not at attention, but we were standing in a dignified way and he came downstairs. He didn't try to speak, but just shook hands with everybody to let them know that he appreciated their being there. He shook hands with us.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he very close to his son, John?

MR. JACKSON: John was close to his mother and father. The other two boys were I am sure, were close but not as close as on the basis that John was.

DR. CRAWFORD: That must have been a terrible loss.

MR. JACKSON: Yes, John would very frequently call his mother and tell her some humorous things that she would enjoy. And I have heard him laughing with his mother on the phone.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he deal with his father the same way?

MR. JACKSON: Well, I don't believe you have the same relation with your father that you and your mother would. He was, I don't know how to answer that. I am sure he was on a friendly basis with his father, but not what I observed in his talking on the phone with his mother.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did this loss affect Mr. Crump? Did he continue with his work the same way?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Went right on with it.

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had John been involved in or interested in politics?

MR. JACKSON: I don't think so.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember what his position was? John's was at the time that he was killed?

MR. JACKSON: He was Manager of the Mortgage Department. Later on it was taken over by Mr. Smythe.

DR. CRAWFORD: Hamilton Smythe. Did you ever travel with Mr. Crump outside of the city?

MR. JACKSON: No. I have a little trouble.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Mr. Crump ever talk about what his aims were for the city? What he wanted to accomplish.

MR. JACKSON: No, I wasn't that close to him. In the halls of the office he would encourage us to go to see the football games because they were in honor of the blind. I don't know if you knew that or not.

DR. CRAWFORD: I've heard about The Blind Game. Was that between two Memphis high school teams? The Blind Game?

MR. JACKSON: I don't know if it was limited to those, but he promoted Blind Games.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you go to the funeral for John Crump?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you remember about him, Mr. Jackson? Where was it held? Was it attended by a lot of people?

MR. JACKSON: I kind of had the feeling when you asked me to describe it of standing room only. Very very crowded. Everybody--friends, politicians, and government employees--nearly everybody was there.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you left there after five years, didn't you, Mr. Jackson?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was just before World War II, I believe, about 1939 or '40 that you left.

MR. JACKSON: I must have stayed there a little longer than five years. It was well into World War II that I left.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did World War II effect the company. Were there any changes in the Crump Company after the war started.

MR. JACKSON: No, I don't remember. I remember two or three boys going into service. Their places were filled and and there was no difference in operation of the company.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was the volume of work about the same?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: When you left there, where did you go, Mr. Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: The LeMaster Company.

DR. CRAWFORD: The Lemaster Company?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where was that located?

MR. JACKSON: In the Falls Building.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did you make the change?

MR. JACKSON: I wanted to go into, more or less, commercial real estate.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that what the McMaster Company specialized in?

In the Falls Building. I believe the architect who designed it was still living. That was during World War II.

MR. JACKSON: Who did you say who designed that?

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Falls. I think he was still living then, the architect.

MR. JACKSON: That's not how it got its name. It got it from the family that owned it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know the man who owned it, sir?

MR. JACKSON: I knew the family. I knew two of the boys. It was grandsons.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember their names?

MR. JACKSON: I was just trying to think. One of them left some money to Southwestern. Falls Lawson and John Lawson. They were one of the principal owners of Falls Building.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now who owned the LeMaster Company at that time.

MR. JACKSON: Edward LeMaster.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was it an old real estate company.

MR. JACKSON: His father was head of it. But Edward started his own company.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where were you making sales then of real estate?

Was it mainly downtown? That was what you wanted to be doing.

MR. JACKSON: Yes. It was not limited to downtown. We hung onto what prospects we had in housing.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you travel around the city much then?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long were you with the LeMaster Company?-

MR. JACKSON: About five years there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember about when you left, sir?

MR. JACKSON: No, I don't.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would have been some time after World War II.

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: The city had started growing by that time, hadn't it?

MR. JACKSON: Yes, but when I think about the growing as we see it now, I think about the growing at that time it was very small, very limited.

DR. CRAWFORD: But it probably didn't look small then did it?

MR. JACKSON: That's right, but I was trying to think what did happen. By comparison I can't.

DR. CRAWFORD: What direction were people moving mainly then?

MR. JACKSON: East.

DR. CRAWFORD: Along Poplar?

MR. JACKSON: Yes. I just can't put the two together going in the direction. I can't give you much variety of it, but it was east.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you sell commercial real estate as the city moved eastward?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: And when you left the LeMaster Company, Mr. Jackson where did you go?

MR. JACKSON: I retired then. I had gotten older and just about the end of my activity.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember what year you retired?

MR. JACKSON: I was interested in outside things and I turned away from real estate.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember what year you retired?

MR. JACKSON: No, I didn't actually have a date, I just quit selling real estate. I don't know.

DR. CRAWFORD: When you left the LeMaster Company you retired then, didn't you?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you still living on Perkins?

MR. JACKSON: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where on Perkins was your place?

MR. JACKSON: One fifty-four North Perkins.

DR. CRAWFORD: Between what streets is that number, sir?

MR. JACKSON: Corner of Barfield. Most of that area was vacant.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Perkins extend all the way north to Summer then?

MR. JACKSON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know how far south it went?

MR. JACKSON: No, but I think it went all the way to Winchester.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Jackson, after you retired how long did you live at your home on Perkins?

MR. JACKSON: My wife died and I lived there till 1970 when my

wife died. I lived there alone from '70 to '80. I stayed in North Carolina five years of that time, but I maintained that house.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did you go to North Carolina?

MR. JACKSON: My daughter lost her husband. I went there to be with her.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did you come back to Memphis?

MR. JACKSON: The only time I was in North Carolina I felt that I was just on a visit. After I had stayed five years I felt that I wanted to come back.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did you come back to Memphis, sir?

MR. JACKSON: I believe it was '83.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you sold your home on Perkins then?

And you have lived here at Wesleyan Highland Towers since that time.

Thank you, Mr. Jackson, we have gotten some valuable information today.

Mr. Jackson, let me ask another question or two. Tell me about your daughter and your niece.

MR. JACKSON: My daughter was born in 1931. My niece was born in 1929. There is a little difference between their ages. I raised them together since I lost my sister. Now, my daughter lives at Asheville and my niece lives in Canada.

DR. CRAWFORD: What is your daughter's name, sir?

MR. JACKSON: Charlotte.

DR. CRAWFORD: And she lives at Asheville, North Carolina.

Thank you, Mr. Jackson. You have lived in Memphis

about 64 years counting your five years back in North Carolina. And you saw Memphis in the Crump era and afterward. How do you think the death of Mr. Crump changed the city? I know it has been much different after his death in 1954.

MR. JACKSON: When he was young he was almost a one political town. I see a very different change in that because the other political parties have become very strong in his absence.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you see any change in the business development in the city after he died?

MR. JACKSON: I don't think so because he had an active connection with the Chamber of Commerce and was enthusiastic about the things that they were interested in and I don't think there was any let down since he left.

DR. CRAWFORD: So it has continued sort of the way he was going while he lived. Thank you, Mr. Jackson.







HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.

DEC 88

N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962

